



The Autism Program

AT BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER

The Autism Program

Boston Medical Center
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www.bmcautismprogram.org

2014-2015 Program Highlights



The Autism Program at Boston Medical Center

assists and empowers those affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder through direct patient support, provider education and community outreach in a culturally competent manner by offering high quality and comprehensive care to all.



NAVEGACIÓN FAMILIAR

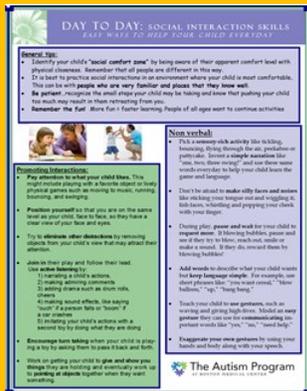
Navigating families through the maze of so many systems while empowering them to advocate for themselves is challenging, especially with those who are in an unstable housing situation, are food insecure, or don't speak English, among other barriers. Approximately 70 percent of BMC patients come from underserved populations, including low-income families and patients from racial and ethnic minority populations. The Autism Program is pleased to have expanded our patient services this year to include the role of a Spanish-speaking Family Navigator, Ivys Fernandez-Pastrana, who works intensely with patient families to address such barriers in a complex care system. This may include facilitating important linkages for health insurance coverage, benefits through the Social Security Administration, overcoming transportation issues and joining the family at outpatient medical visits when requested. Our family navigator also attends IFSP/IEP meetings to ensure timely and appropriate educational services for ASD. Welcome Ivys!

Resource Innovation

The BMC Autism Program curates a rich and dynamic online and in-house resource library, which is designed to fill critical gaps in resources available to families. One example of such is our "Day to Day" series, which explores various topics like therapeutic strategies in a family-friendly manner.

In 2014, a sample of resources developed by the BMC Autism Program include:

- Sibling Support Packet
- Social Stories and Visuals
- Safety Packet
- Summer Guide
- Gov't Benefits Guides
- iPad Application List
- Relaxation Brochure
- Day to Day Series: Healthy eating, Social Skills, Augmentative and Alternative Communication



Patient Care Numbers

Since January 2014, the BMC Autism Program has served over...

300 families through direct patient referral,
over **100** families through community trainings and workshops,



received nearly **600** "likes" on Facebook and countless others through our continuing collaborations within our community and beyond.

"When our child was first diagnosed with ASD I have to admit that I knew very little about the condition. Luckily for us BMC was able to direct us towards The Autism Program specialists, who offered great emotional support. I cannot express how grateful and what a difference it made for us to have such support, knowing that there was help at hand, practical assistance and frankly just a shoulder to lean on."

-Parent of 3 year old

Striving to help and strengthen every family in need.

Community Based Outreach

The BMC Autism Program has partnered with many community agencies such as the TILL Autism Support Center, Boston Public Schools, the Boys and Girls Club of Dorchester, and the Boston Police Department to fill critical support gaps through creative program collaborations, trainings and events.

In the past year these have included:

- Dad's Support Group
- Teen Social Skills Group
- Parent Resource Night at Boston Public Schools
- Boston SPEDPAC Resource Fair
- Autism Speaks Walk
- Grad Level Psych Lectures at UMass Boston and Tufts University



Grants

We are currently participating in several grant funded projects including:

"Considering Culture in Autism Screening: A Cultural & Linguistic Competence Training Curriculum for Pediatric Providers," an initiative funded by the Deborah Noonan Foundation. The results from the study will be considered for inclusion in the Center for Disease Control (CDC)'s "Autism Case Training Curriculum."

"Autism Gene-Link," funded by the Genetic Alliance in collaboration BU School of Public Health researchers to improve patient and provider knowledge, awareness, and understanding of genetic testing for ASDs, and facilitate access to genetic services.

Student Interns

Our program offers ongoing semester long and full year internships to students at Tufts University, Boston University, and Harvard University for creative, driven undergraduate and graduate level students to apply their rich academic training to the critical work in developing resources and providing family support.

For more information about our volunteer opportunities, contact: bmcatismprogram@gmail.com

PLAN (Parent Leadership in Autism Network)

Our Parent Leadership in Autism Network (PLAN) is an initiative developed in collaboration with TILL Autism Support Center to engage empowered caregivers of children & adolescents with ASD to serve as mentors and supports to other parents. PLAN is comprised of thirteen remarkable parents leaders who represent culturally diverse populations, including Chinese, Vietnamese, Cape Verdean, Haitian Creole and Latino families. "Matches" are made on an ongoing basis to assist families with facing a new diagnosis, IEP and transition planning, strategies to address toilet training, picky eating, and personal care/hygiene and support around navigating complex family dynamics etc.

Qualitative feedback from participating parents demonstrates meaningful gains for both parent leaders and matched participants. *"Autism does not come with instructions and I was constantly wondering if I was doing things right."* *"I feel that the more I am empowered, the more I can empower other people because of PLAN."* *"This group is changing the way autism is perceived and how it is accepted and advocated for. I would recommend it to all parents."*



Autism Awareness Day

The BMC Autism Program held our annual Autism Awareness Day on April 8th in BMC's Shapiro building lobby, which was attended by nearly 100 families, friends, and campus staff wishing to gain knowledge and network.

An accompanying resource fair showcased the work of the Boston Police, Autism Insurance Resource Center, TILL Autism Support Center, BU's Center for Autism Research Excellence, the Boys & Girls Club of Dorchester among others.



The needs of low-income children affected by ASD are vast and variable and yet critical support like that which is provided by Autism Specialists is neither billable nor reimbursable through insurance companies. The Autism Program thus relies on philanthropic support to maintain its functioning, continued growth, and success.

The BMC Autism Program would like thank the generous funders who make our work possible:



JE & ZB Butler Foundation

The Goodman Family

Covidien CARES

The Deborah Noonan Foundation

The Genetic Alliance

The Autism Consortium

The Kames Family

The Staples Foundation